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2. Soviet Strategic Concepts  
3. Soviet Arms and Equipment

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## War Preparations

1. During the summer of 1948, the Soviet General Staff gave orders to accelerate war preparations, probably as a direct result of the international political situation.
2. The center of gravity of the preparations has been moved to the east. It is no longer in eastern Germany and Poland, but is now in the region immediately west of Kiev. Fortification projects to the west of Kiev have been accelerated. The belt apparently follows the line Vinnitsa-Berdichev-Zhitomir-Rovno. To the north, this line seems to extend to the Baltic; to the south, it seems to join the natural defenses of the Carpathians; but the area of maximum strength is clearly between Vinnitsa (49°15'N, 28°30'E) and Rovno (50°38'N, 26°15'E).
3. In the Vinnitsa-Rovno sector during the summer of 1948 many infantry and armored divisions were seen concentrating, and in late July and early August they were reinforced. In railroad stations in the area there were many military trains. Especially plentiful were armored troops. The troops were quartered chiefly in secondary centers. New depots of war material were observed almost everywhere, but particularly in this sector.
4. The most important center is that of Kamenets-Podolsk (48°40'N, 26°35'E), the point of departure for highways to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. In this area the preparations, all of recent date, are sufficient to shelter an army.
5. At Lvov a new first-class airport has been completed.

## Strategic Concepts

6. Until the spring of 1948, the supposed line of departure of the Soviet forces was the Lübeck (Germany) to Trieste axis. It is now clear that it has been moved to the line west of Kiev. This indicates a defensive plan rather than an offensive one. The original plan of the Soviet General Staff was based on the expected abandonment of Europe, except for Great Britain, Spain, and possibly southern Italy, by the Western powers in the first stage of the war. The Soviets expected these three areas, as well as bases in North Africa and the Middle East, to be used as bridgeheads from which an American offensive would be launched.

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- 2 -

in the second phase. The American offensive was expected to be aimed at the Russian industrial quadrangle, Baku (Azerbaidzhan)-Turinsk (Urals)-Stalinsk (Siberia)-Stalinabad (Tadzhik), with the destruction of which would come the crumbling of the Soviet front in the west. The original Soviet push, then, was to be aimed at the Near and Middle East and the eastern Mediterranean. The extent to which the Soviets had carried offensive plans north of Iran in the crisis of 1945 is said to be surprising.

7. The change in plans is reported to be a result of the American attitude toward Greece, Turkey, Iran, and Italy. In fact, the Soviet General Staff is convinced that there has been a change in American plans: that, if once the Americans thought of reconquering Europe, now they think of defending it. Therefore, the Soviets have decided to seek the European decision behind the Vinnitsa-Daugavpils (Latvia) line, apart from the Asiatic decision, which they expect to be settled in China. They believe they can entrust the battle of attrition to their eastern European satellites and to the forces they now have in eastern Germany. It is in the Russian tradition to sacrifice the worst troops before the best. This, according to the Soviets, permits them to study the tactics and strategy of their enemies in the first phase and to profit from this study in the final phase. Soviet armed forces now in Central Europe amount to only about one-eleventh of the Soviets' full strength and, even if they all were lost, would not constitute a crippling sacrifice.
8. The present Soviet troop strength is estimated at 4,000,000. The troops on a war footing are formed into six army groups. It is ridiculous to speak of "mobilization"; only men of 45 years or over are now on inactive status. In certain Russian villages today 500-600 women can be seen to every 30-50 men.
9. The Soviets count little on the armies of the satellite countries. They discount completely aid from Yugoslavia, because of the Tito-Cominform split, and from Czechoslovakia, because the Czechoslovak forces are not sufficiently pro-Soviet.

#### Arms and Equipment

10. The state of arms of the troops indicates that the new program of equipment begun in 1945 has advanced rapidly. Rifles have in large part been replaced by automatic weapons, mostly of the new short type similar to the German machine pistol. This weapon is well adapted to individual use; it seldom jams, resists rust, and functions well in very low temperatures. It has been mass-produced with spoilage up to 15-20 percent. However, rifles are still in use. On the average, an infantry company has one platoon of automatic weapons and two platoons of rifles, but the proportion is constantly changing in favor of automatic weapons.
11. There is an evident tendency to relegate to the second line the employment of infantry howitzers, which are considered by the lower officers to be difficult to perfect, heavy and hard to maneuver, and costly to manufacture. Instead, there has been an enormous development in the production of mortars. Since 1945, the production of infantry howitzers has been practically abandoned in favor of grenade launchers, bomb throwers, mortars, and anti-tank and anti-aircraft weapons. Mortars are being supplied in the following calibers: 82 mm., 120 mm., 180 mm., 200 mm. Firing theory is based on the employment of mass.
12. The tendency in mechanization is toward the simplification of machines, toward "machines which even fools and old women can operate", in the words of a lieutenant of the Soviet armored force. The models are reported to be superior to those supplied under lend-lease, at least for use on Russian terrain. The tractors are uniformly track-driven. Tractors on wheels have disappeared.
13. In the technical field, bolts have been eliminated in the construction of armor. Because the flying bolt, under the impact of an enemy projectile, was a great danger to armored personnel in the last war, the German system of fusion has been abandoned and armored cars are now stamped. Soviet armored forces have thus been reinforced by the perfection of old types of equipment, such as the Stalin tank.
14. The simplicity of maneuver of the new Russian tanks is evident. This is due in part to Fritz Kreis of Auto-Union, Chemnitz, who has worked on German models, abolishing the change of gear, which is now automatic. The Kreis system not only simplifies the operation, but notably lessens the strain on the transmission.

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